

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 OMB-01 IO-13 SAM-01 /089 W

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R 200930Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6898

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PDIP, PFOR, MT, IS, EG

SUBJECT: NEW ISRAELI AND EGYPTIAN AMBASSADORS TO MALTA

REF: VALLETTA 0810 (NOTAL)

1. REFTTEL REPORTED FORTHCOMING RETIREMENT OF ISRAELI AMBASSADOR BENYACOV, HIS PROBLEMS WHILE HERE AND THE LONG DELAY (SINCE APRIL 27) IN OBTAINING AGREEMENT FOR HIS SUCCESSOR. BENYACOV NOW TELLS US THAT AGREEMENT HAS BEEN RECEIVED, BUT ONLY AFTER HE POINTED OUT TO THE MALTESE THE POSSIBLY UNFORTUNATE REPERCUSSIONS AMONG THE ELECTORATE HERE IF THEY BECAME AWARE THAT MINTOFF WAS DRAGGING HIS FEET ON THE QUESTION. BENYACOV ALSO THOUGHT THAT THE ENTEBBE RAID, WHICH "SHOWED THAT THE TIGER STILL HAD SOME TEETH", MAY HAVE HAD A SALUTARY EFFECT.

2. ALTHOUGH THE OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT MAY NOT YET HAVE BEEN MADE, THE NEW ISRAELI AMBASSADOR, EXPECTED TO

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ARRIVE IN AUGUST, WILL BE RAPHAEL MIGDAL, PRESENTLY

SERVING AS CONSUL GENERAL IN LISBON. BENYACOV DESCRIBES HIM AS A CAREER OFFICER, TRAINED AS A LAWYER, AND AS OF ITALIAN ORIGIN. WE WOULD APPRECIATE FURTHER INFORMATION FROM THE DEPARTMENT OR LISBON ON MIGDAL.

3. BY COINCIDENCE, THE EGYPTIAN CHARGE IN MALTA, SAMIR KAMEL, INFORMED US ALMOST SIMULTANEOUSLY THAT CAIRO HAS DECIDED TO ELEVATE ITS MISSION HERE TO FULL EMBASSY RANK. THE NEW AMBASSADOR IS TO BE SALAH ABDIN. ABDIN REPORTELY HAS PREVIOUSLY SERVED IN BENGHAZI AND NAPLES AND IS IN HIS EARLY FORTIES. THE PRESENT NON-RESIDENT EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR (RESIDENT IN ROME) PLANS TO COME TO MALTA FOR HIS FAREWELL CALLS IN SEPTEMBER, FOLLOWING WHICH THE NEW AMBASSADOR WILL ARRIVE TO PRESENT HIS CREDENTIALS. KAMEL SAID, HOWEVER, THAT AGREEMENT HAS NOT YET BEEN APPROVED ALTHOUGH HE DOES NOT EXPECT ANY DIFFICULTIES ON THIS SCORE.

4. KAMEL STATED THAT HE IS RETURNING TO CAIRO (AFTER FOUR YEARS IN MALTA) FOR AN ASSIGNMENT AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. HE SAID THAT MINTOFF HAS SOUGHT A RESIDENT EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR FOR SEVERAL YEARS. THE APPOINTMENT OF THE NEW AMBASSADOR IS, THEREFORE, AT LEAST PARTIALLY IN RESPONSE TO A GOM REQUEST. ANOTHER REASON MAY BE TO BALANCE THE VERY ACTIVE LIBYAN MISSION HERE. WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY FURTHER INFORMATION FROM CAIRO OR THE DEPARTMENT ON ABDIN. SMITH

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